

Regents Recap

Highlights of the Activities and Official Actions of the Louisiana Board of Regents

January 31, 2006

Regents Swear In New Member, Install Officers

At its January 5 meeting, the Louisiana Board of Regents swore in newly-appointed Board member Mary Ellen Roy. Roy replaces outgoing Regent Reggie Dupré.

Mary Ellen Roy received her B.A. in Political Science from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and her J.D. from Harvard Law School. Roy, a resident of New Orleans and a partner in the Phelps Dunbar law firm, is active in a variety of professional, civic and school organizations.

The Board also voted unanimously to extend the terms of its 2005 officers for one year.

"The Board approved the term extension based on the conviction that it is in the best interest of our colleges and universities for the Board of Regents to maintain leadership consistency and stability during this next critical year of disaster recovery," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie.

Continuing in their offices for 2006 will be Roland Touns, Chair; Frances Henry, Vice-Chair; and Pat Strong, Vice-Chair. A change in the Board of Regents by-laws was approved at the meeting to allow the term extensions to take effect.

In addition, the following Board members will serve on the Regents' Executive Committee for 2006: Roland Touns, Frances Henry, Pat Strong, Richard D'Aquin, Stanley Jacobs, Robert Levy, and Artis Terrell.



Mary Ellen Roy, the newest Board of Regents member, takes the oath of office at the January 5 meeting.

Regents Rule On Fate of Unaccredited Programs Statewide

The Board of Regents terminated seven of eighteen academic programs statewide which have not achieved national accreditation as required by Louisiana's Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education. The remaining eleven unaccredited programs, all of which have demonstrated reasonable progress toward required accreditation, were granted an extension of up to one year to complete the process. Louisiana's current Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education, adopted in 2001, stipulated that selected programs at Louisiana public colleges and universities earn (or regain) accreditation within an established time frame or be discontinued. Programs tagged for mandatory accreditation were those for which it was determined that such a designation was necessary for professional practice in a given field or to indicate and ensure program quality. The measure was part of the Master Plan's sweeping and successful strategy to improve the quality of the state's public postsecondary education system.

"The story here is not the handful of programs that were terminated for lack of accreditation," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie, "but rather that more than 98% of the programs mandated for accreditation have responded successfully to the call for improved quality and accountability. Louisiana's public colleges and universities have made significant progress as a result of the reform initiatives driven by the Master Plan. Program accreditation, of course, is part of a much larger success story."

While the programs slated for termination must immediately cease admitting new students, those students already enrolled in the programs will be given ample time and accommodation to finish out their degrees if they choose to remain in the programs.



Roland M. Touns
Chair

Frances T. Henry
Vice Chair

Pat A. Strong
Secretary

William "Billy" Blake
Scott O. Brame
Richard E. D'Aquin
Stanley J. Jacobs
Ingrid T. Labat
Robert W. Levy
W. Clinton Rasberry, Jr.

Virgil Robinson, Jr.
Mary Ellen Roy
William Clifford Smith
Harold M. Stokes
Artis Terrell, Jr.
Chris Jividen
Student Member

E. Joseph Savoie
Commissioner of
Higher Education

Board Action - January 25-26, 2006

Relief Funds Allocation Explained

Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Research Theresa Hay summarized for the Board the allocations of federal hurricane relief funds to higher education. She noted that \$10 million has been approved by Congress and given to the U.S. Department of Education (USDoE) for distribution to institutions that accepted hurricane-affected students for enrollment in 2005-2006. Of the \$10 million, Louisiana institutions will receive \$5,748,160. Any institution that participated in campus-based programs (Workstudy or SEOG) can qualify for the assistance. According to Hay, institutions received approximately \$1,000 per student or the amount requested by the institution.

Hay next reported on the \$27 million allocated in federal assistance based on reallocation of unexpended campus-based funds from the 2004-2005 award year. She said that the USDoE contacted institutions located in the areas affected by the hurricanes and which were forced to close, relocate or significantly curtail activities, and participated in at least one of the campus-based programs. Louisiana institutions will receive approximately \$17 million of the \$27 million. Hay said that institutions received the amount they requested, but not more than \$2 million.

Hay also reported that a recent decision by President Bush gave the USDoE the authority to waive the repayment of Title IV funds. Students who withdrew from impacted institutions do not have to return loans or grants.

Next, Commissioner Savoie discussed the supplemental appropriation of \$95 million authorized by P.L. 109-148, the Department of Defense, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations to Address Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, and Pandemic Influenza Act 2006. He said an agreement has been signed between the USDoE and the Board of Regents for the administration of the \$95 million appropriation.

Savoie said that a meeting had recently been held with presidents and chancellors of impacted institutions to solicit suggestions and recommendations on providing assistance to students and institutions. He said that according to latest enrollment estimates, approximately 22,000 individuals who were college students before August 29 are not enrolled in college today and that nearly 20,000 high school seniors were displaced when area high schools had to close. He added that since an incentive to encourage students to return to college in Louisiana for fall 2006 could be effective in a re-enrollment effort, 10% of the \$95 million would be set aside for a Rebuild Louisiana Scholarship fund.

Regents Receive Report On K-16 Partnership Program

Dr. Kerry Davidson, Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, reported that eleven campuses have submitted proposals requesting a total of \$5.4 million under the Regents' K-12 Partnerships For School Reform program, for which the Regents have committed \$3 million over the next three years (FY 2005-06 through FY 2007-08). He told the Board that the review panel will meet on March 15-17, 2006, to interview representatives from campuses and schools and evaluate proposals. Members of the panel are: Dr. Nancy Streim (Chairperson), Associate Dean for Graduate and Professional Education, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Irvin Hamer, Executive Vice President for Client Services and Strategic Development, The Millennium Group (a private foundation in New York which promotes education reform through technology and infrastructure improvement); and Dr. Gail Dickinson, UTeach Program (established for recruiting, developing, and retaining a new generation of mathematics, science and computer science teachers), University of Texas.

Program Approvals

The Board of Regents approved the following proposed new academic research units, letter of intent, and progress reports on conditionally-approved programs:

Proposed New Academic Research Units:

Louisiana State University and A&M College - Hearne Institute for Theoretical Physics; Center for BioModular Microsystems

Proposed Letter of Intent:

Louisiana State University and A&M College - B.A. in Religious Studies

Progress Reports on Conditionally Approved Programs/Centers:

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans - Doctor of Physical Therapy;

Southern University Baton Rouge - Master of Engineering;

University of Louisiana Lafayette - M.S. in Engineering - Petroleum;

Louisiana Delta Community College - A.S. in Early Childhood Education

MP, LCTCS Funding Allocations Detailed

Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Donnie Vandal presented to the Board an update on the allocation of \$10,000,000 appropriated to the Board of Regents by the legislature for performance incentives in support of institutional efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the Master Plan for Postsecondary Education and for continued growth and development of community and technical colleges and learning centers. The funding was approved during the Board of Regents' August 2005 meeting.

Vandal reported that initially \$4,000,000 would be allocated to four-year systems, \$4,000,000 would be allocated to the LCTCS, two-year institutions and learning centers, and the remaining \$2,000,000 would be retained by Regents for new state initiatives. Vandal reminded the committee, however, that the schedule was held in abeyance in December pending the outcome of budget reductions from the 2005 First Extraordinary Legislative Session.

Vandal reminded the Board that the funding was affected by a five percent mandated reduction, and that although the remaining allocations for the LCTCS and two-year institutions and learning centers and four-year systems would remain funded at the same level, the proposed allocations had been revised.

Commissioner Presents LTC Reorganization Plan To LCTCS Board

On Wednesday, February 1, Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie presented to the Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) a plan for the Board's consideration that would dramatically alter the structure of the Louisiana Technical College (LTC). The plan would streamline the institution's administrative structure and redirect resources to support the workforce training programs most critical to Louisiana's long-term economic health. Creation of the reorganization plan was called for in Act 506 of the 2005 Legislative Session.

"The plan presented to the LCTCS Board focuses the resources of the Louisiana Technical College on the workforce training and economic development needs of our state," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "Providing workforce training and education services to every region of Louisiana is critical to rebuilding efforts. Our fiscal crisis demands that we focus on students and programs, not administration."

Among other key recommendations, the plan calls for the elimination of the statewide administrative structure governing the 40 LTC campuses, merging some critical functions into the LCTCS operating structure. LTC campuses would obtain these services by being integrated as units of multi-campus regional technical education centers and through partnerships with area community and technical colleges.

The LCTCS Board will review the recommendations and take official action on an implementation plan on March 8.

LONI Hardware Begins Rolling Onto Louisiana Campuses

The Louisiana Optical Network Initiative, known more generally as LONI, took a giant step toward completion this week as the first of five new IBM P5 "grid" computers to be connected across Louisiana through the network was delivered to Louisiana Tech in Ruston. LONI is a fiber-optics research network that will interconnect mainframe computers at Louisiana's major research universities and medical schools.

Tech's IBM P5-575, nicknamed "Bluedawg" (a reference to Tech's school colors and sports mascot) is the first LONI project server to be deployed beyond the LSU-Baton Rouge campus (which already has its LONI servers in place). Next in line to take delivery of their P5s are the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the University of New Orleans, Tulane University and Southern University.

The combination of the IBM P5s and LONI's connection to the National LambdaRail (NLR), a nationwide grid-computing infrastructure, will allow researchers to transmit data at speeds several thousands time faster than currently possible. As a direct consequence of LONI's creation, the Louisiana Board of Regents has become a member of NLR, often characterized as having the potential to be to our nation's technological development what the interstate highway system has been to interstate commerce.

"With its high speed optical network and IBM supercomputers, LONI is a giant step forward, and puts Louisiana in a national leadership position, not only in deploying the most advanced high-tech infrastructure, but also in using it for scientific, engineering, arts, and business applications," said Edward Seidel, director of LSU's Center for Computation & Technology at LSU. Seidel, one of the originators of LONI, was recently named a member of the National LambdaRail's Science Research Council.

Bob Fudickar, technology industry director for the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and member of the LONI Management Council, was also on hand for Tech's P5 "plug-in" this week.

"The dynamics of academics, research and economic development depend heavily on technological superiority," Fudickar said. "Many of our state's current and future startup technology companies stand to benefit significantly from LONI, especially in the area of product development."

Delivery and installation of the remaining P5s destined for UNO, UL-Lafayette, Southern University and Tulane is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.



With the P5 supercomputer at his back, Louisiana Tech's vice president for research and development, Les Guice, chairman of the LONI Management Council, explains the capabilities of the new high-performance computer to, from right, Louisiana Tech President Dan Reneau, Board of Regents member Bob Levy and Bob Fudickar, technology industry director for the Department of Economic Development.

For more information on these and other Board of Regents actions, please visit our web site at www.regents.state.la.us